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ABSTRACT

National language planning involves four interdependent processes that ideally constitute a cycle: fact-finding, policy formation, implementation, and evaluation. Each of these processes is more difficult in the relatively young but highly pluralistic nations of Africa. A community-based model of language planning offers ways to alleviate or rectify some of those problems by the use of a decentralized and more participatory approach to the language planning process. Whereas African governments feel compelled to assume most of the responsibility for all stages of language planning, more local-level input and activity could provide greater benefits at reduced cost. The community-based language planning model (CBLP) includes establishment of a community language center at the geographic or demographic center of the language community, which would be requested by the community and staffed by trained local native-speakers. The community would be responsible for the material needs of personnel and operations and for public relations. Certain language tasks, such as instructional programs and literacy projects, would have to be accomplished within a predetermined governmental time-frame. CBLP claims to offer a more direct route to successful planning and implementation by making language managers aware of public needs and usage, by making users aware of language planning agencies' products and services, and by creating a demand for those services. (MSE)

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Paul R. Kozelka

Community-Based Language Planning

A movement needed and starting in West Africa

Publication H-7

1985
Centre international de recherche sur le bilinguisme
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INTRODUCTION

Most of the nations of sub-Saharan Africa are marked by high levels of ethnic and linguistic diversity. Some have more than 200 languages and in only a minority can we find an African lingua franca or a dominant African language that is spoken by a preponderant majority of the population. In 1967, for example, Pierre Alexandre counted 4 linguistically homogeneous states; 9 homogeneous states with dominant languages immediately usable on a national level; 9 with dominant languages not immediately usable at that level; and 11 with no one dominant language (1967/72:88-90). This ethno-linguistic heterogeneity (see Tables 1 & 2) poses a certain number of communication problems which in turn may constitute serious obstacles to the tasks of development.

In the past two decades since independence, African countries have generally chosen to retain the language of their former colonial metropoles to serve official functions: in government, in education, in the armed forces, and as the language of wider communication (LWC) for international affairs. Governments in many of these new nations have, however, been confronted with a triple dilemma in terms of what to do about African languages. One aspect of the dilemma is that, given present resources, it is unrealistic to expect a majority of their largely rural populations to become functional in an LWC in the foreseeable future. If, for the purpose of this discussion, we define functional competence as the ability to use a language both to fulfill basic daily

TABLE 1

Degree of Multilingualism

Country	Population[1]	Language of Largest Group[2]	Language Primacy (if diff)[4]	Other Large Groups	No. of Langs.[3] (Languages)
Benin	2.7 million	Fon-Ewe-60%		Bariba,Yoruba	±15
Botswana	700,000	Tswana-90%		Shona	2
Burundi	3.5 million	Kirundi-99%		Kirundi	2
Cameroon	6 million	Beti-Pahouin-18%		Bamileke,Duala	50+
C.A.R.	1.6 million	Banda-31%	Sango?	Baya, Mandja	35+
Chad	4 million	Arabic-46%		Sara, Maba,	±20
Congo	1 million	Kikongo-52%		Teke, Lingala,	?
Gabon	500,000	Fang-30%		Eshira,Banjabi	±15
Gambia	360,000	Mandingo		Creole,Wolof	3
Ghana	8.5 million	Akan-44%		Dagomba,Ewe,Ga	30+
Guinea	4 million	Malinke-48%		Fulani,Kpelle	±20
I. Coast	8 million	Baoule-20%		Kru,Mande	50+
Kenya	11 million	Kikuyu-20%	Swahili	Luhya,Luo	20+
Lesotho	1 million	Sotho-95%		Zulu,Xhosa	3
Liberia	1.2 million	Mande-44%		Kru,Bassa	25+
Malawi	4.5 million	Nyanga-46%		Lomwe,Yao	±10
Mali	5 million	Bambara-55%		Fulani,Senufo	±15
Maurita.	1.2 million	Arabic-80%		Fulani	±5
Niger	4 million	Hausa-46%		Songhai,Fulani	10+
Nigeria	90 million	Hausa-30%		Igbo,Yoruba	200+
Rwanda	3.5 million	Rwanda-90%		Swahili	2
Senegal	4 million	Wolof-37%		Fulani,	±10
S. Leone	2.5 million	Mende-31%		Temne,Vai	±10
Somalia	3 million	Somali-95%		Swahili	3
Sudan	16 million	Arabic-51%		Nub,Darfur	100+
Tanzania	15 million	Sukuma-12%	Swahili	Ha	50+
Togo	2.2 million	Ewe-40%	Kabiye		±30
Uganda	10 million	Ganda-20%	Swahili?	Soga,Nkole,Lango	±25
U. Volta	5.3 million	Mossi-50%		Dyula,Senufo	20+
Zaire	22 million	Kikongo-30%		Swahili,Lingala	50+
Zambia	4.3 million	Bemba-15%		Luapula,Lamba	±60

Notes:

[1]This table is adapted from C.J.E. Okonkwo (1975), who adapted it from D.G. Morrison (1972). It is consequently in grave need of updating and verification. It is intended only to provide a general idea of the degree of multilingualism.

[2]xx% indicates % of total population for whom it is L1.

[3]In the absence of reliable language serveys, the number of languages is merely approximate as indicated by the use of + and ± signs. The data are enough, however, to distinguish between heterogeneous and relatively homogeneous countries.

[4]Language primacy is given for countries where there are indigenous lingua francas with more speakers than the language of the largest ethnic group.

TABLE 2

Language Policies

Country	Exoglossic Language	Any Natl. Lg.?[1] (No.) Usage%	%Pop. for whom Natl. Lg. Native[2]	Lingua Franca (if any)[3]
Benin	French	--	--	Fon-Ewe
Botswana	English	Setswana (M) 99%	90%	Setswana
Burundi	French	Kirundi (M) 99%	99%	Kirundi
Cameroon	French-English	[5]	--	Beti-Pahoun (r)
C.A.R.	French	Sango (M) 25%	5%	Sango
Chad	French	--	--	Arabic46%,Sara28%
Congo	French	--	--	Lingala (r)
Gabon	French	--	--	Fang
Ghana	English	[4]	??	--
Guinea	French	[8]	--	--
Ivory Coast	French	--	--	Dioula (80%)
Kenya	English	Swahili (M) 65%	5%	Swahili
Lesotho	English	Sotho (M) 98%	Sotho	
Liberia	English	English??	4%	English
Malawi	English	--	--	Nyanga-60%
Mali	French	Bambara?	?	Bambara-80%,Arabic
Mauritania	French	Arabic (V) 87%	80%	Arabic
Niger	French	--	--	Hausa
Nigeria	English	[3]	?	Hausa
Rwanda	French	Rwanda (M) 98%	90%	Rwanda,Swahili
Senegal	French	[1?]	?	Wolof-60%
Sierra Leone	English	--	--	Krio,Mende
Sudan	English	Arabic (M) 60%	50%	Arabic, Pidgin English
Tanzania	English	Swahili (V) 80%	5%	Swahili
Togo	French	Ewe, Kabiye	30% 10%	Ewe,Hausa
Uganda	English	--	--	Ganda,Swahili
Upper Volta	French	--	--	Mossi
Zaire	French	[4]	??	Lingala,Swahili
Zambia	English	--	--	English?

Notes:

[1] (V) and (M) after the names of NLs indicate vigorous or moderate implementation policies. (S) indicates that the languages are symbolic and not assigned any significant function in government. (r) after the name of a lingua franca means that the language has limited regional use.

[2]% in this column represents % of population for whom the NL is the native variety.

[3]Percentages are given for lingua francas that are not NLs but are used by a sizeable percentage of the population, i.e., lingua francas that have a good chance of becoming national languages.

(Sources: C.J.E. Okonkwo 1975; D.G. Morrison 1972)

needs and to be minimally informed about national affairs, we note that, at best, in Ghana and the Ivory Coast, for example, no more than 30-40% of the population have reached this level in English or in French. As Alexandre observed in 1967,

> Vernacular languages must occupy a privileged position in adult education...it would appear difficult--although it has been tried, but without success--to ask peasants who return exhausted from their work to learn French and reading and writing and the use of fertilizers or advanced techniques of burnt-clearing-- all this in several hours or several days [per week]. (1967/72:96)

A second aspect of the dilemma is that if a government is to communicate effectively with the masses and if it has any hope of codifying and conserving some part of an authentic cultural heritage, then something will have to be done to promote the development and use of indigenous African languages. The third facet of the dilemma is that, whereas at the present stage maintaining an LWC for a broad range of functions seems to pose little threat to the primary objectives of development, political stability and economic viability, the issues of choosing and promoting indigenous languages seem to many African governments to be fraught with political risks and potential pitfalls which may seriously undermine the legitimacy of the state.

African governments have, with few exceptions, chosen one of two approaches to resolving this dilemma. The first is to choose not to deal with the issue of African languages at all, or to make only token efforts to do so, until such time as success and stability in other areas of development are assured. The second course is to accept some of the risks inherent in the formulation and implementation of rudimentary or conservative policies for "national languages" (NLs) in the hope that

the benefits will outweigh the costs and will hasten other processes of development. Such countries as the Ivory Coast, Gabon, and the Congo fall into the first group; Mali, Ghana, Nigeria, Togo, Tanzania, and Zaire are representative of the second.

LANGUAGE PLANNING PROBLEMS IN AFRICAN NATIONS

The basic enterprise of national language planning (LP), that is, attempting to resolve language problems through deliberate measures on a national level and for national purposes, involves four processes which are interdependent and, ideally, constitute a cycle.

1. Fact-finding is identifying the language problems and the sources of conflicts in a speech community, assessing the communicative needs and possible motivations to change patterns of structure and usage, and determining the extent of L1 and L2 usage and thereby the "size" and delimitation of speech communities.
2. Policy-formulation is determining which political and/or socio-cultural goals are to be served by language policies: e.g., improved access to jobs or literacy, inter-regional comprehensibility, documentation of oral traditions; and designing policies to meet those objectives.
3. Implementation is the establishment of structures, institutions, or programs to apply policies; and most important, designating agents and authorities.
4. Evaluation is assessing the success achieved in meeting objectives and especially in motivating acceptance of policies by target populations; this will likely involve procedures similar to those of 1.

Each of these processes makes demands which are significantly more problematic in the relatively young yet highly pluralistic nations of Africa. The principal obstacle to fact-finding in these areas, for example, is the lack of means. In countries where self-sufficiency in food production is still often a chimera, where human resources are still concentrated largely in agricultural modes of production, and where scarce finances are allocated first and foremost to serving basic human and economic needs, government leaders find it hard to motivate and justify investment in such long-term projects as language surveys.

Whereas the issues inherent in policy-formulation may not be much different in nature for developing African nations since furthering nationism and nationalism or maintaining the political status quo are the concern of all states, they may be more problematic there due to the multiplicity of interests involved and to the heightened vulnerability of relatively new political infrastructures. Events in Africa and elsewhere[1] have clearly demonstrated the potential of language policies to exacerbate inter-group tensions and rivalries.

Compounding the issues is a certain sense of urgency which may be exemplified by the observation in many African countries that although the use of an LWC offers an immediate, politically expedient solution, younger generations are becoming progressively less competent in any language. This foreshadows, for many, the degradation and loss of their cultural heritage.

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[1] Riots broke out in India following the promulgation of certain language policies.

The problems most often cited concerning implementation are based generally on the lack of financial resources, the absence of infrastructures and trained personnel, and the need for appropriate models and guidelines for the formulation and application of language policies. Language planning experiences in Europe, for instance, have little application in countries with low literacy rates and a limited or nonexistent pool of resources. Also, as Charles Ferguson has observed in an article on national attitudes toward language planning (1979), there are significant contrasts between such cases as Sweden, where LP is desired, accepted, and considered a non-political issue, and in Tanzania, where LP is widely seen as necessarily political.

Evaluation, potentially the most crucial process, again poses the problems of material expenses and, much like policy-formulation, must take into account the possible political and social costs of what the results or findings (especially failures) will show. "Qui s'excuse, s'accuse"[3] is an adage to which many African governments subscribe.

The model to be proposed here, community-based language planning, would seem to offer ways to alleviate or rectify some of the above inadequacies through the use of a more decentralized and participatory type of approach to the processes of LP. Whereas African governments are presently compelled, or feel compelled, to assume a predominant share of responsibility for all stages of the enterprise, more local-level input

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[3] Excusing oneself means accusing oneself.

and activity could provide greater benefits at reduced cost, both in terms of the investment of scarce resources and in the risks involved. Examples to support this notion will be drawn from both the past and the present.

West Africa has been chosen as the focus here because it is the area we are most familiar with, because the ethnic pluralism and linguistic heterogeneity found in nearly all the countries of the region pose particular problems in the realm of language planning, and because several states there show signs of adopting approaches analagous to ours.

CENTRALIZED LANGUAGE PLANNING: POTENTIAL ASSETS

In an article assessing recent accomplishments in the field of language planning, Bjorn Jernudd renews a question whose answer is often considered axiomatic: "Should language be left alone?" American linguists' response to this has generally been "yes", whereas that of language planners is more often "no". Jernudd reaffirms an ideology common to related domains of development theory, according to which it is generally believed that "development can be brought about or accelerated by government intervention" (1983:351-352; citing Myrdal 1968:709). Much has been said in LP literature about the value that language policies and centralized planning on the national level may have for the work of nation-building (e.g., Fishman 1971;1972). The following discussion argues against extensive centralized government intervention, and suggests that community-based language planning is a necessary and appropriate alternative for West Africa (and for developing nations elsewhere), that it is a real option already being practiced in more than one country, and that it offers good chances of success.

One argument advanced in favor of centralized, authoritarian choices and policies is that they can, indeed must, contribute directly to the enterprise of nation-building, whether in the realm of nationism: facilitating communication for administrative and "life-support" operations (education, health care, etc.) or in that of nationalism: promoting socio-cultural integration, unity, and political mobilization. From a political scientist's point of view, Brian Weinstein holds that:

> Political development focuses on integration of a people or nation-building, legitimization of government institutions and procedures, extending the levels of participation, creation of an effective bureaucracy, and deciding how goods and services should be distributed. All these facets of development may be seen in African States today, and communication is an element of each one. Choices made with respect to language affect most clearly the process of nation-building or integrating diverse peoples into a new level of community. (1983:56-57)

An example of LP contributing poorly to nationism might be that if a farmer receives literacy training in his maternal tongue but cannot make himself understood when he goes to the hospital, or cannot read the directions on a prescription because they are written in French or English, then both he and the nation have been done a disservice. A positive contribution, on the other hand, would be the development of standardized forms of a language for use in the broadcast media. Similarly, it is often argued that the cause of nationalism may be subverted by the promotion of a number of African languages, which encourages identification with, and loyalty to, lesser groups than the nation as a whole. In contrast, an instance of how LP furthers nationalism might be that a common language would hasten efforts to establish and preserve a common cultural heritage.

Another argument for top-down formulation and administration of language policies in new nations is the shortage of resources: a lack of trained personnel, few technical documents available, little access to data and analysis from similar experiences elsewhere, scarcity of publishing materials, and so on. Governments in these circumstances often seem to be (or are portrayed as) the sole bodies capable of mobilizing--from within the country or from external sources--the means to plan and implement nation-wide policies in the domain of language. This purport-

ed ability to develop, assemble, and coordinate both human and material resources is used to justify unilateral supervision and dominance in both status and corpus planning.

Along with the power to command and coordinate expertise, a government-directed language planning body will also be in a position to insure that those languages selected for promotion and development will benefit equally from available resources, although in reality this is rarely the case. In Togo, for example, one of the national languages, Ewe, has benefitted from corpus planning and development since the mid-19th century, initially provided by German missionaries and linguists (Schlegel, Spieth, Westermann, and others). A significant body of literary and linguistic works has continued to accumulate in and on Ewe.[3] This, along with strong promotion of its use and study in neighboring Ghana during colonial times, plus political favoritism accorded to it by earlier political regimes in Togo, gave it a "headstart" over the second national language, Kabiye, which is still undergoing codification and standardization. There are presently discrete accusations being made that development of the latter (the maternal language of the President and of much of the army) is being favored and that productive work in or on Ewe is being hindered until Kabiye "catches up". Regardless of whether or not this is true, or even whether both Kabiye and Ewe were proper choices for NL status, it seems reasonable to expect that equality of status for both will be the ultimate goal, insofar as this

[3] cf. Lafage 1974,1975 "Contribution à un inventaire chronologique des ouvrages entièrement ou partiellement en langue Ewe" (Parts I & II); Zielnica 1976 "Bibliographie der Ewe in Westafrika" (120+ entries on language); and Amegbleame 1975 "Le livre Ewe: Essai de bibliographie" (400+ works in Ewe).

can be deliberately "engineered".

As a nearly universal practice, some of the earliest language policies designed and implemented in any country are directed at and channeled through the schools (Ferguson & Dil 1979). Formal education offers a well-developed, existing means for the dissemination of innovations and is a good way to mold attitudes and behavior before conflicting ethnic or sectarian loyalties which would detract from unity and nationalism are formed from other sources. In a majority of African nations, where the educational system is now almost entirely controlled by the central government, the schools appear to be an ideal avenue for the promotion of language policies by government authorities. Those in power claim that they alone are in a position to take the long-range perspective, or that they alone have the means to support the long-term investment inherent in educational policy. These claims will be re-examined below.

Government administration of language planning and policies in countries where central government is the principal motor of development should also facilitate their articulation with other development programs. Objectives and programs may be coordinated in such a way as to reinforce each other, as in the integration of agricultural and literacy projects in Mali's "Opérations de Developpement rural", thus favoring cumulative motivation for their adoption (cf. Harman 1974).

The ability to pool limited resources, or to multiply the scope and effect of their investment, is an invaluable aid to agents of development in new nations. In a number of countries, language policies and

even the National Language Committees receive support from several ministries: Education, Social Welfare, and Rural Development, for example. In Senegal, no less that 6 ministries have had some responsibility for language. (Weinstein 1980:67) In many instances, however, the pooling of resources at this level is still insufficient to allow stated objectives to be met within any useful time frame.

TOP-DOWN LP: POTENTIAL WEAKNESSES AND DISADVANTAGES

Predicting the success or failure of government intervention in LP is somewhat problematic since it must ultimately be based on the attitudes both of language planners and of the larger community of users. Whereas it is fairly easy to recognize their decisive role in the acceptance, and thus the success, of language policies, it is much more difficult to measure attitudes in any quantifiable way. Another elusive aspect of LP is, as Thomas Gorman (1973) has observed, that in many countries few LP decisions are codified or regulated. Whether or not this is intentional, that is, designed to obviate reproach of any sort, it does have the effect of hindering constructive feedback and impeding much of the evaluative process essential to success.

These factors notwithstanding, it is important to note, especially given empirical data accumulated over the past several decades of LP experience in Africa and elsewhere and taking into account observations of the present state of affairs in African nations (Weinstein 1980, and personal research), that government monopoly of language planning and policies has not always proven to be the ideal solution and has sometimes been prone to a number of weaknesses and disadvantages which would seem to argue for a modified or new type of approach. The ostensibly irreducible argument that a wholly centralized administration of national language policies is a key element in creating national unity can thus be shown to be fallible for many highly pluralistic African na-

tions, and appears rather as a proverbial two-edged sword: helpful, yet implying certain political risks. While claiming to advocate the centralist position, Herbert Kelman nevertheless strongly qualifies his statement:

> ...while the development of a national language may be highly conducive to the creation and strengthening of national identity, the deliberate use of language for purposes of national identity may--at least in a multi-ethnic state--have more disruptive than unifying consequences. (1971:21; emphasis original)

Similarly, C.J. Emeka Okonkwo, a Nigerian linguist, while maintaining that one of the primary functions of language is to unify, argues at length that the most important course of action in ethnically and linguistically heterogeneous African countries is to avoid the "potentially divisive saliency" of language, that is, to avoid having language in itself become a cause of political division (Okonkwo 1975).

Andrew H. Apter's (1982) "National Language Planning in Plural Societies: The Search for a Framework" criticizes the "simplistic notion of national integration" prevalent among language planners and sociologists, and the "widespread misconception...that a shared national language somehow generates a national identity". Apter asserts that a pluralistic model

> ...exposes the liberal desideratum of national language planning-- the transcendence of linguistic parochialisms and the establishment of national identity and solidarity--as fundamentally misconceived. Shared national language does not by itself generate or sustain national identity, a basic point made by [Max] Weber but apparently overlooked since the 1920's. (1982:221)

One of the most facile consequences, and thus greatest hazards, that may result from governments assuming sole responsibility for language

policy is the perception--real or imagined--that policies in general or in particular are biased for or against certain groups. This cannot fail to provoke or exacerbate inter-ethnic tensions and rivalries, despite the conciliatory progress some African polities have made in this area since independence. Weinstein, in his travels in West Africa in 1979 specifically to study language planning and policies, found that

> On the negative side it is clear that the planned introduction of African languages has led to ethnic conflict in Mauritania and Mali, but where countries engage in no planning, as in Ivory Coast, class conflict may be emerging. School dropouts accuse governments of protecting the class interests of ruling elites through a French only policy, but it is clear that in most African countries, policies protect certain ethnic groups as well, and that even with French suppressed, members of some ethnic groups would still be excluded from good jobs. (1979:71-72)

Choosing to devote a nation's limited resources to the promotion of only selected languages may be implicitly condemning "the others" to extinction--albeit in the more or less distant future. Unless the motivtion to adopt one of the NLs (or to have it adopted by one's children) is strong enough to compensate for this effect, the threat is felt immediately at the individual and collective level. An example of this can be found in Mali (cf. Weinstein 1980:70). Fear is thus another obstacle to the promotion of nationism and nationalism through language policies, an obstacle comparable to the resentment and resistance generated by favoritism or nepotism.

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Motivating widespread acceptance of language policies is clearly the key to their success. And yet, in African nations where 80% of the population is still rural, where agriculture is the principal means of earning a living, and where world economic conditions continue to make material well-being the primary concern of urban peoples as well, political ideology is becoming less and less likely to motivate such basic social changes as language use. Due to persisting economic and political problems in many African countries, and to the apparent inverse relation between quantity and quality in the growing educational sytems, élites may now be too far removed from the masses in physical distance--residing largely in the cities, and too close in ever-shrinking socio-economic distance, to inspire the imitation of their language behavior that might otherwise be expected to bring about changes. That is, erstwhile role models for upward mobilization in the rural milieu seem less élite in the urban context and are less "accessible" to rural populations. A gradual economic and cultural levelling between classes seems to be occurring which is lowering intra-group prestige norms.

Compounding th individual's predominant concern with basic subsistence in West African countries are two attitudes prevalent on the societal level. In those cases where governments have failed since independence to significantly promote nationism and nationalism despite relatively long-term political stability, there is an erosion of trust:

an increasing scepticism about their promises and projects which discourages adherence to policies promulgated by the central hierarchy. In other situations, where instability has come to be the general rule, there is now a pervasive feeling that "This regime (and its distasteful policies) will pass...", and the effect is the same.

Even though they may be somewhat more quantifiable than attitudinal constraints, the limits on resources discussed earlier:

- insufficient or nonexistent training of LP personnel,
- little access to information on the policies and experiences of other countries,

and

- the lack of financial means to fully implement decisions at all levels,

may have equally deleterious effects on the outcome of language policies. In fact, a lack of power, skills, or financial means is often invoked by government planners and administrators as an excuse for inadequate results or for the less-than-equitable nature of some policies.

Added to this, even in the presence of well-trained, highly motivated personnel and (occasionally) sufficient financing, there is often a lack of awareness throughout the society of real socio-linguistic forces and needs, a desire on the part of higher political echelons not to be confronted with potentially embarrassing realities or feedback, or even a tacit intention not to seriously pursue stated policies at all. Jernudd (1971:492) speculates that

> ...a society can play a game of pseudo-issues of language as a surface manifestation of political and social affiliations, thus registering and scoring power-points, with little

> explicit relationship to the reality of language, ostensibly rallying the forces around discussion and decision. ... Initially, the language movement [in Norway] was based on national feeling "which called for self-realization in language as in other matters" (Haugen 1966:116). Later it became a playground for group politics, with a less systematic motivation by real communication problems.

and adds that "Perhaps it was naive...ever to have thought otherwise." (Jernudd 1983:360) His analysis could all too easily be applied to a number of African cases. Here, as elsewhere in the world, it is frequently difficult in evaluating LP to distinguish what governing officials do not know from what they do not wish to know. Village and regional agents of Togo's adult literacy programs, for example, were genuinely surprised to have officials of the Ministry of Social Welfare (i.e., their superiors) come and tell <u>them</u> what was already common knowledge at the lower levels: that the number of languages in use for their work was clearly too small for the diversity of the target populations and was responsible for most of their failures.

One of the aspects of language policy implementation which advocates of top-down, government-imposed plans seem to ignore, or at least fail to take into account, is the potential that parents and teachers have to be the ultimate "authorities" or "arbiters" for any enterprise in this domain destined to affect future generations. Such user-level LP agents are role models, and their natural attitudes and usage will have as much, if not more, influence on changes in structure and usage than will legislated policies, albeit only tacitly. While some may argue that the like-father-like-son "multiplier effect" will operate only beginning with "the next generation", present adult language attitudes and practices do have an influence: one which does not stop as soon as their

children graduate from school, leave home, and (possibly) begin to adopt some of the prescribed norms as they take over their seniors' positions in society.

Hence, giving due consideration to perspectives, motives, and possibilities of wider involvement on the local level--whether in education or beyond it--would seem to offer a powerful alternative to practices presently in vogue in African LP. It can be shown that a bottom-up approach has numerous advantages, and supporting evidence for this notion can be found in past and present work undertaken by non-governmental organizations.

THE PAST: "MISSIONARIES I"

Fairly detailed accounts exist in history books, in language planning literature, or in church archives, of the extensive linguistic work Christian missionaries accomplished in Africa and elsewhere (e.g., Hair 1967; Todd 1962). While not always armed with the theoretical or material means now available to linguists, missionaries did engage in status and corpus planning activities. The scope of their efforts was not limited to the local level, yet the most significant aspect is the fact that they began and continued to be informed by operations at that level.

The basic imperative for the missionaries was to evangelize, and this meant communicating with peoples in language forms they would find acceptable. Codification was an essential first step, and subsequently standardization, or some sort of trans-dialectal compromise, was necessary to make the most efficient use of limited human and material resources. Evaluative feedback was immediate and ever-present. It seems safe to assume that if populations could not understand what was being preached or if they felt too uncomfortable with the language being used, the effect would be evident: either from verbal feedback through church officers or from people "voting with their feet", and the chances of converting them would be clearly threatened.

The missionaries from Bremen, Germany and from Scotland who worked in Eweland (centered on the present Togo-Ghana border) from the late 19th century on, are a good example. They deemed a mixed, composite, or artificial variety of Ewe unacceptable, and chose to work in the Aŋlɔ dialect after determining that it had fairly wide comprehensibility. A widely acceptable form of spoken and written "book Ewe" evolved from their teaching in a seminary school set up near the geographic center of the region, and was used throughout the churches and schools.

Once an initial level of conversion was obtained, or a minimally acceptable level of communication was reached, increasing strength of Christian faith would, other things being equal, help to foster increasing tolerance of any variation from the local norms. Neither government administrators of similar language policies today nor their prospective "converts" benefit from such powerful and transcendent motivating forces. Appeals to nationalistic feelings, for example, appear to have failed in filling this role. The lesson to be retained here, however, is more the difference in the organizational level at which communicative needs were detected and incentives to change were discovered and cultivated, rather than the type of motivation involved.

From the late 19th century up to the early 1960's--the era of independence for most African countries--attempts were made in almost every area targeted for missionary work to establish at least primary school programs, to conduct them mainly in the local dialect or in a superceding regional standard, and to gradually introduce a metropolitan or international language after about the third year of study. At the secon-

dary level, some instruction in the native tongue continued to be a requirement in many schools even in the post-colonial era. Although the failures may not often have seemed worth recording, and although the language of instruction is not always noted, reports on education in pre-colonial or colonial times frequently mention the relatively high standards set and attained by mission schools. Such institutions were generally, and in many instances still are, training elites. Nevertheless, the motivation and standards that they were able to provide for the continued study of standardized local languages are invaluable as models for present and future language planners.

Other assets of missionaries' work in and on local languages were (and sometimes still are):

- the adult literacy programs they established had a specific, immediate goal with inherent rewards: learning to read the Bible, for example;
- financing for their work was relatively independent of local politics;
- those who administered language programs, from teachers to linguists and translators, generally received training appropriate to their level of work, sometimes even including a period of more intensive instruction in the metropole itself.

Although in the very recent past, due to financial constraints and political pressures, church-related, institutional missions have had considerably less influence on the study and promotion of local or regional languages in Africa, many continue to work on tasks of codifica-

tion, adult literacy personnel continue to receive training from them, and literacy courses for the public are still given. It was most often in those ethno-linguistic regions of Togo farthest removed from the centers of power and policy, for example, that I observed at least one prominent member of each mission strongly committed to and still actively engaged in linguistic study and instruction...sometimes, but not always, Europeans.

THE RECENT PAST AND PRESENT: "MISSIONARIES II"

Complementing the traditional missions, especially in the past 3-4 decades, have been individuals or working groups professing Christian faith who are making significant accomplishments in codifiying and standardizing languages heretofore neglected by all but a few linguistic researchers. They, too, are translating the Scriptures into local languages and developing literacy programs which eventually enable people to read their translations. While sometimes sparse in number, members of SIL (the Summer Institute of Linguistics), the Wycliff Bible Translators, SIM (the Sudan Interior Mission), and Baptist missions, generally begin with, and continue to receive, appreciable amounts of linguistic training. Their devotion to the task is frequently worthy of Koelle or Schlegel, and their results, though perhaps smaller in scale, often far surpass government efforts in quality.

Here again, we would emphasize the closeness of relations between these "agents of language planning" and the speech community. One SIL missionary in Togo, for example, sends a well-known local barber on weekly rounds to read each newly translated chapter of scripture in homes and villages in order to test for clarity, accuracy, and acceptability. Another, working on the most diversified and politically sensitive of the two NLs, first established his own trial versions of a standard orthography and morphology, then convened one community member from each recognized dialect group, taught them to write using his con-

ventions, and made adjustments according to what he learned from this ad hoc "language committee". At various stages he presented his findings to the local language institute and to the national language committee, a group composed of linguists and others who were responsible for standardizing and promoting this language but who spent more time bickering due to differences in political status, linguistic training (if any), or ethnic origin, than they did formulating, implementing, or evaluating policies. A Baptist missionary in Togo uses video-taping to show the progress both of local literacy teachers in training and of their students.

These linguistic missionaries, and other linguists working privately both within the countries and from without to promote a variety of African languages, depend entirely on non-coercive means of gaining popular acceptance for their enterprises. They are thus obliged to create or tap such sources of motivation for learning and change as are to be found at the level of the daily lives and concerns of the masses. Illiterate village chiefs in Togo, for example, seem more genuinely eager to obtain and promote the use of mimeographed adult-literacy readers written by participants in local SIL writers' groups than they do to advocate the acquisition and use of government publications. Price is certainly a non-negligeable consideration here, but what independent organizations such as missionary groups invest quickly and directly into production appears to be equivalent to, or far less than, what governments in West African countries devote merely to the often complex, centralized administrative infrastructures of LP programs (with generally little left over for the real work of analysis and corpus production).

TOWARD AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH

Based on the relative successes of independent organizations such as missions, and on the lack of expediency evident in present courses of prescriptive government intervention, there would seem to be considerably more advantages than disadvantages, at all levels, in adopting a kind of decentralized "laissez-faire", regional or locally-based approach to planning and motivating changes in language structure and use. In terms of available resources, as Karl Deutsch has observed:

> ...it should be pointed out that the underprivileged language groups, typically, have at some stage in their development an excellent supply--some people would say, almost an oversupply--of intellectuals with linguistic talents, capacities, and training. (1972:13)

The safest course politically, Deutsch suggests, may be to opt for pluralism and to "give the linguistic minorities a choice" (1972:22).

It does seem plausible that whatever a government's ultimate NL policies are and whichever objectives may be embodied in those policies (the tacit extermination of certain languages excepted), much could be gained in such highly pluralistic societies from, first, an equitable allocation of available resources among all interested groups and then, eventually, the provision of additional support to those groups which seem to make the most of the initiative and demonstrate profitable use of the initial investment. Without guaranteeing the elevation of any languages to NL status, governments might find in the development of provincial or regional languages a compromise that is beneficial and satisfactory to a

majority of interests. This approach is what we are calling "community-based language planning", where authority and responsibility for LP are concentrated at the community or regional level.

In financial terms, the advantages of a pluralist approach might include diminished losses or waste due to smaller investments more widely distributed and more subject to direct control by those likely to benefit from them. In situations where Deutsch's prediction about the availability of language planning agents on the local or regional level obtains, such persons may be used in the initial stages of work: doing attitude or dialect surveys, for example, while they--or others--are being trained for further stages. This should also aid in resolving two problems constantly confronting African governments and their language planners: the inability to provide adequate linguistic training to sufficient numbers of teachers, and the question of how to fill their positions in the interim. Such an approach would have the additional advantage of sensitizing local populations to the nature of LP problems and issues in a non-threatening way.

In terms of political strategy, delegating responsibility for language policies and their implementation to a province or community on a provisional basis, other things being equal, would seem to alleviate much of the risk of failures causing embarrassment to the national government. Rendering errors less salient in the public eye should, in principle, allow more freedom to change and adapt policies as the need arises. Similarly, there should be less vulnerability to accusations of favoritism or linguistic genocide.

Relative to language policies for education, it seems safe to assume--irrespective of the overall approach taken to national language planning in each country--that an international language and one or more NLs can be taught beginning some time around the third year of schooling. It also seems likely, given the general consensus among linguists along with the strong recommendations promulgated by UNESCO since 1953 and the growing frustrations of pluralist West African nations with the declining status of their students' proficiency in any language, that there will soon be a movement to institute use of the maternal tongue--or of a closely related regional standard--for the first three years of schooling wherever possible. In Nigeria, studies have shown that Yoruba-speaking students in Yoruba-medium schools not only perform better on standardized tests than do those in English-language schools, but that they do better in English as well (Weinstein 1983:103). Which languages are chosen, how the decisions will be made and by whom, will depend on how responsibility for language policy is apportioned throughout the nation as a whole. The proposed community-based approach will, in theory, allow more input from parents and teachers--those most likely to influence language behavior and attitudes. It may also offer some solution, again following Deutsch's hypothesis of the availability of grass-roots linguists, to the fairly universal problem of there being disproportionate numbers of teachers or researchers from various ethnic groups or regions.

THE BASIC CBLP MODEL

In summary, our hypothetical model is based on the following assumptions:

1. That most African nations will continue to use an LWC such as French or English as their official language and that they possess a professional institute of some sort capable of providing trained personnel to oversee research efforts.
2. That in highly pluralistic societies the LWC, predominant indigenous language, or a relatively widespread lingua franca can be made to serve the goals of nationism and nationalism at least as easily as any other language or policy orientation, and that this is, in fact, the present position of most African countries.
3. That promoting the study and use of mother tongues will facilitate acquisition of an LWC (or lingua franca) and will provide a non-threatening way to introduce the products of language planning.
4. That development (codification, standardization, and increased intertranslatability) of local or provincial languages will counteract any negative effects that the sole usage of a national or official language to promote goals of nationalism might have on distinctive aspects of the various cultural heritages.
5. That for any given language at least one person can be found with, or can be provided with, fundamental training in descrip-

tive and socio- linguistics. This may include expatriates, missionaries, and so on.

This model is designed primarily for application in relatively homogeneous, rural areas since that is where 75-80% of sub-Saharan Africans live and work. More heterogeneous urban centers, especially those where settlement does not tend to be by distinct ethno-linguistic groupings, will require a somewhat different treatment which is beyond the scope of the present discussion.

As the foundation of CBLP, we would propose the provisional establishment of a community language center (CLC) at the geographic or demographic center of each language community which has a population of at least 10,000 and which requests it. If the inevitable questions of how to define "a language community" and how to arrive at the minimum population base would seem to vitiate our arguments by reintroducing considerations of political power and available resources, one answer is inherent in the model: it seems unlikely that a community of less than 10,000 could provide the necessary material support for a center. Another answer is that such determinations may be based on the size and number of generally recognized language groups relative to the total population.[4] Lines ultimately have to be drawn somewhere and language planning itself is, by nature, political. As Uriel Weinreich once remarked, a language is a dialect with an army and a navy.

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[4] In Ferguson 1962, for example, 10% of the total population is given as the discriminant for a "major language". (See also Deutsch 1972:10)

Each center would be staffed by native-speakers from the area, ideally elected or appointed by local authorities. The personnel would initially receive some common training at a national workshop, through university programs, or under the auspices of a language institute. Their responsibilities would include seeking community input to, and carrying out, the four basic processes of language planning. Linguistic experts presently employed by the government or linguists working independently in the area could serve as itinerant advisers or trainers.

All centers would be dependent on two provisos for their existence: that the community would provide for the basic material needs of the personnel and operations, and that certain basic language planning tasks would have to be accomplished within time limits predetermined by a supervisory governmental agency or commitee. The CLCs would be responsible for public relations measures sufficient to support and justify their own existence. Thus, if a language community failed to provide enough material support or socio-political cooperation for a center and its work, other things being equal, then its existence would be jeopardized. Although such constraints would at first appear rather ruthless, they would allow each community an essentially equal chance to detect, stimulate, and measure local support for language planning products before larger decisions concerning further work and the allocation of government resources had to be made.

Further details concerning the logistics of establishing and operating such centers would differ little from those of any other administrative agency or participatory development project and will not be dis-

cussed here. Of greater interest are the advantages relative to the obstacles presently faced by African nations in the four basic areas of LP.

CBLP offers a shorter, more direct route to achieving successful planning and implementation: by making language managers aware of public needs and usage, by making language users aware of LP agencies' products and services, and by creating a demand for those services. Some other advantages would include an increased number of tasks that could be accomplished for an increased number of languages if the limits presently imposed by government resources in terms of finances and personnel were reduced or removed. Instructional programs established at the CLCs could potentially reach more people (especially teachers) on a more regular and more structured basis than present in-service programs, which depend in large part on costly trips to language institutes in major urban centers or on rare and fleeting visits from school inspectors or ministry officials. The CLC might also double as a base for literacy projects, receiving material support from them and fostering collaboration on various projects of mutual interest.

Many African nations have established, or have long hoped to establish, language institutes on a national level. CLCs could conceivably serve as temporary training grounds or as research "antennae", and might eventually become branches of such institutes. Moreover, they would offer lower overhead and greater proximity to data bases and feedback. In areas where missionaries' LP operations have already been initiated, well-designed and supported CLCs could benefit from their expertise and resources.

In terms of political advantages, the centers could help lessen opposition, for example, between proponents of purist or authenticity-based policies and advocates of more functional, communicative-need orientations to LP. The centers could contribute to other developmental goals, such as reducing the rural exodus by increasing mobilization for development and participation at the local level. Recruiting school-leavers as survey agents (who would live at home and be supported by their families), for example, and adding an instrumental element to educational programs presently attempting to promote "l'etude du milieu" (cf. Belloncle 1979) might help to remedy urban migration. Given the less salient level at which the centers would operate, there would, other things being equal, be fewer political risks associated with pilot projects or with any perceived differential in the rates of development of various languages.

The notion of language planning and implementation at the community level has been invoked elsewhere. Rebecca Agheyisi observed in July 1983, that

> Since voluntary and other local orgnizations continue to be highly effective organs of development for minor languages, it is extremely necessary that a viable implementation chain be developed to provide the missing link [to the central LP agency]. A possible form of this link might be the establishment of state or regional branches of the national language center which would serve to coordinate the activities and regulate the procedures of the local agencies. These national language center branches would also make possible some measure of policy adaptation to local conditions and local implementation agencies. (1983:32)

Some instances of activities and structures similar to those proposed here are to be found in Togo--where a few small regional language com-

mittees or institutes situated in the milieu receive substantial support and guidance from SIL missionaries, and in Senegal--where the Fulbe have increased work on their own language (Poular) and have established "l'-Association pour la renaissance du Poular" in reaction to the government's promotion of Wolof as a national language (Weinstein 1980:70). Benin is initiating the concept of mobilization around language issues at local and provincial levels as a prerequisite to government support, and the Ivory Coast and Nigeria (among others) maintain some form of collaboration between missionaries and their own larger language institutes.

CONCLUSION

Any community-based or regionally-oriented development planning will have some decentralizing effects, including the potential to accentuate regional or inter-group differences. However, other things being equal, approaches at this level may encourage greater participation in the national system. In his model of a tri-lingual education system for Cameroon, Maurice Tadadjeu proposes different functions for national languages, provincial languages, and local languages. He suggests promoting tri-lingualism at the national level (mother tongue, plus provincial language or NL, plus LWC) and encouraging bilingualism at the provincial level. His belief that "languages can play a unifying role at the national level if they already play this role at the provincial and local levels" (1975:72) seems both credible and promising.

The choice facing governments of highly pluralistic, developing African nations now seems to be <u>either</u> to continue present centralized language planning (whether explicit or de facto) at the risk of:

- loss in cognitive aptitude and development potential in any language,
- perpetuating the rural exodus, engendering cultural alienation in urban areas, and suffering the costs of policies which fail on a national scale,

<u>or</u> to adopt a decentralizing process such as CBLP which moves toward a kind of pluralism in language planning that will ultimately be more per-

sonal than territorial. General observations about current problems of development (e.g., Belloncle 1979) suggest that administrative decentralization in even more domains than just language research and policy-making may be the only solution. As sociolinguists or language planners, we cannot pretend to predict which courses of action governments will adopt. We can, however, make an essential contribution by providing theories, guidelines, and models that reflect as much as possible the social, political, and linguistic realities pertinent to language planning activities in various areas.

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